

From the Editor

Perhaps the most enduring image of the attack on America is that of firefighters defiantly raising the American flag atop the rubble of the World Trade Center. Often overlooked and usually underappreciated, it is the firefighter we turn to for salvation when disaster strikes. Join Steve Harding for an inside look at the forging of firefighters in "Firefighter University."

Another often overlooked and underappreciated profession is that of the logistician. From Afghanistan, SSG Alberto Betancourt showcases the backbone of the war on terrorism, the 101st Airborne's 626th Forward Support Battalion, in "Kandahar's Supply Hub."

Whether it's the screaming eagle of the 101st or the shield of the 1st Cavalry Division, few military symbols evoke as much pride and emotion as the shoulder-sleeve insignia. In "More Than a Patch," Beth Reece takes us on an evolutionary journey from an artist's idea to a soldier's shoulder.

Finally, Heike Hasenauer's "Memories of 'BK'" chronicles a community's fond farewell to soldiers and their families as the Army ends its five-decade presence in the German city.

John C. Suttle

Superb, But Inaccurate

YOUR magazine continues to provide superb news and articles for us soldiers.

To assist you in your quest for excellence, I offer two spelling changes in your March article "We Were Soldiers..."

First, "Fort Totten," headquarters of the 77th Regional Support Command, is really Fort Totten. Second, the unit you referred to as the "63rd Reserve Support Command" is actually the 63rd Regional Support Command (the USAR has 12 regional support commands and no "reserve support commands").

*Chaplain (COL) Doug Lee
via e-mail*

DOF on Target

A LETTER in the March Feedback section ("Purple Heart or DOF?") questioned whether the new Defense of Freedom medal is a "medal we really don't need."

This is because, in the writer's view, the Purple Heart could have been awarded to civilians injured in the terrorist attack on the Pentagon.

Unfortunately for the letter writer (name withheld by request), the website from which he got his information is simply wrong. From 1943 until 1997 civilians were, in fact, eligible for the Purple Heart — and about 100 received it. In 1997, however, Congress passed legislation restricting the Purple Heart to uniformed personnel.

This, of course, explains exactly why the Defense Department created the Defense of Freedom Medal — because the Purple Heart was no longer available to recognize the sacrifices made by our civilian brothers and sisters.

*COL Fred Borch
via e-mail*

Patriotism in Stone

I READ with great interest and enjoyment your March article "Repairing the Pentagon." Your story was very well written and informative. I am also thankful for the chance to see photos of the work in progress on the Pentagon — images I have not seen on TV.

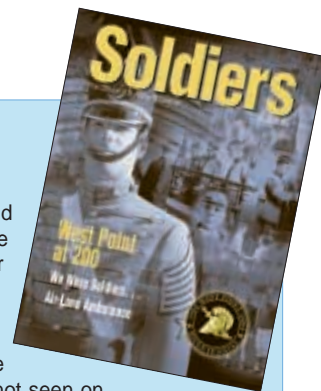
Part of the reason I'm so interested in this subject and so pleased to see it featured in your magazine is because my husband, Danny R. Wood, works at the limestone mill where the stone is being quarried and fabricated to replace what was destroyed on Sept. 11. My husband is also a first sergeant in the Indiana Army National Guard. I am extremely proud of both his professions.

All of the mill's employees exhibit a strong sense of patriotic pride in sending their work to Washington, D.C. They have even inscribed their names on a special cornerstone to be used in the rebuilding.

So many of us have a desire to help rebuild what was torn down that terrible day, and these men actually have the privilege of doing so. And they are aware of what an honor it is.

Thank you for your coverage of this story. It is important to let the world know that no matter what the terrorists demolish, America will simply rebuild it — stronger.

*Micki Wood
via e-mail*



Ambulance Facts

I WANT to give you a heads-up about an inaccurate statement made by a solder quoted in the March article "Air-Land Ambulance."

SFC Steven Seitz, a platoon sergeant in the 557th Medical Company, stated that his unit is the only 40-vehicle M997 ground-ambulance company in the active Army. That statement is not exactly accurate. There is also the 514th Medical Company, which also maintains 40 M997 ground ambulances. The 514th belongs to I Corps' 62nd Medical Brigade at Fort Lewis, Wash.

I just wanted to ensure that

you, your staff and especially your readers are aware that there is more than one of this type unit serving on active duty.

*CPT Jeffery L. Mosso
via e-mail*

Bad Language, or PC?

WITH regard to LTC Shea's letter in the April issue, someone should tell him to stop being such a prude and overly PC. Is he trying to create a tempest in a tea pot? I really cannot believe you would give him the print space you did, much less highlight his comments like you did.

Your handling of the "We Were Soldiers" article was

tasteful and right on. While Galloway's comment may have been a little too colorful, it was not over the edge nor did it require LTC Shea's comments. Galloway could have said worse, and within the context of the article it was way too small to notice.

As a military historian who has interviewed many veterans, I can tell you that we try to get the raw, unencumbered remembrances of the people who were there. It may be crude and graphic, but it is honest and instructive. It is also an example of our most cherished freedom — the freedom of speech, which is really the freedom to be ourselves.

"We Were Soldiers" is an outstanding tribute to those who fought and died in Vietnam. I do not see how you "failed to uphold the Army Core Values" in the article. If anything, your article showed integrity (one of

those values) by not "artfully editing" Galloway's words.

LTC Thomas B. Tennant,
USAR
via e-mail

More Than Shores

IN the April 2002 Focus on People you state that the Military District of Washington Engineer Company at Fort Belvoir, Va., helped "shore up the Pentagon" after the Sept. 11 attack so that rescue workers could more easily reach the wounded and dead. The MDWEC didn't build shores for *other* rescuers, we *are* the rescuers!

The company is the only urban search and rescue (US&R) unit in the Army. During the initial operations at the Pentagon there were four US&R teams from the Federal Emergency Management Agency; MDWEC was the fifth US&R team.

Yes, we shored the building, but that is just one of the many tools used during rescue operations.

CPT Aaron C. Barta
via e-mail

Posters and Kudos

THANKS for all the staff's hard work at Soldiers Magazine. It has always been, and continues to be, one of the most positive, informative and upbeat publications about life in the Army.

I can honestly say that I have never read an issue I didn't enjoy and learn something as well.

Keep up the great work!

LTC John Karaus
via e-mail

Good Job, Eh?

I'M currently serving with the Canadian army contingent in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Our integration with the American forces here has been a great success, and I have made a lot of new friends. It has also been my pleasure to read your magazine, and I am really impressed with it.

Would it be possible to get a subscription to Soldiers?

Thanks for your help, and keep up the good work.

CPL John Allison
Kandahar, Afghanistan

Thanks for the kind words. We've put the subscription information in the mail to you, along with several back issues.

Soldiers is for soldiers and DA civilians. We invite readers' views. Stay under 150 words — a post card will do — and include your name, rank and address. We'll withhold your name if you desire and may condense your views because of space. We can't publish or answer every one, but we'll use representative views. Write to: **Feedback, Soldiers**, 9325 Gunston Road, Ste. S108, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5581, or e-mail: soldiers@belvoir.army.mil.



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